

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 487

By Miller L

A RESOLUTION to honor and commend Morgan Freeman for a lifetime of achievement and excellence in American cinema and television.

WHEREAS, it is fitting that the members of this General Assembly should salute those gifted citizens who through their inherent talents and extraordinary efforts have distinguished themselves as actors, directors, and narrators; and

WHEREAS, one such noteworthy person is Morgan Freeman, who was born June 1, 1937, in Memphis, Tennessee; he grew up in Mississippi and drew upon the language and culture of that region to bring veracity to certain roles, while never allowing it to limit the breadth of parts available to him; and

WHEREAS, in 1971, Mr. Freeman appeared on the television series *The Electric Company*, playing the characters Mark, Easy Reader, Mel Mounds the DJ, Count Dracula, Mad Scientist, and the Cop; this was followed by a number of television movie roles quietly establishing his credentials until the 1987 film *Street Smart* for which, at age 50, he was nominated as Best Supporting Actor for his interpretation of the role of the pimp, Fast Black; and

WHEREAS, now, at age 66, his career spans 32 movies in 25 of which he starred, for a total gross of \$1,299,522,924, with an average gross of \$48,522,924 for those in which he

starred; six of the films in which he appeared grossed over \$100,000,000, including *Robin Hood: Prince of Thieves*, *Deep Impact*, *The Sum of All Fears*, *Driving Miss Daisy*, *Unforgiven*, and *Se7en*; and

WHEREAS, his roles in *Glory*, *Amistad*, *The Shawshank Redemption*, *Outbreak*, *Along Came a Spider*, *Nurse Betty*, and *Lean on Me*, among many others, served to make Morgan Freeman a familiar and formidable presence in American cinema; and

WHEREAS, highly respected among his peers, Mr. Freeman is recognized for his ability, according to Chris Herrington, to be "...both authoritative and warm, to project wisdom and experience and repel irony...he lends a gravitas to almost every film he's in..."; he has been nominated for Best Actor for his roles in *Driving Miss Daisy* and *The Shawshank Redemption*; and

WHEREAS, Morgan Freeman maintains a home in Charleston, Mississippi, and operates Madidi, an upscale restaurant, and Ground Zero, a blues club in Clarksdale, Mississippi, along with numerous other business and charitable interests in the area; his most recent films are *Dreamcatcher*, directed by Lawrence Kasdan, and *Levity*, which opened this year's Sundance Film Festival; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Freeman was recently the Honorary Chairman of the Fourth Annual Memphis International Film Festival, which ran from March 27-30 and featured several of his films, including the 1993 *Bopha!*, an examination of apartheid in South Africa, which he directed; and

WHEREAS, Morgan Freeman is most grateful for the love and companionship that he shares with his wife, Myrna Colley-Lee, and his four children, Alfonso, Sailfoulaye, Deena, and Morgana; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Freeman epitomizes the spirit and dedication that are characteristic of a true Tennessean; his commitment to excellence to his profession serves as a model and inspiration to those who will follow him; and

WHEREAS, this General Assembly finds it appropriate to pause in its deliberations to acknowledge and applaud Morgan Freeman for his life of outstanding contribution to American screen and television acting, and his beneficial charitable and business activities; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED THIRD GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that we hereby honor and commend Morgan Freeman for a lifetime of achievement and excellence in cinema and television, thank him for his recent appearance in our State at the recent Memphis International Film Festival, and extend to him our best wishes for every future success and satisfaction.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.